

Honorable Task Force Members,

I am deeply hurt and saddened by what happened in Sandy Hook. Normally I would never contact anyone about this, but I have personal experiences with two of the topics you had meetings about, firearm ownership and people with mental health issues. I can not personally attend the hearing, but want to send you this email since I feel so strongly about these issues.

It is important for everyone to focus on the two issues both pro and anti gun people can agree on. Keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and keeping guns away from people with mental health issues. Banning so called high capacity magazines and assault weapon firearms is just not going to work. Tougher penalties for criminals who use firearms in the commission of a crime and building a strong mental health system which can really help mentally ill people are the only way to reduce gun violence. I hope all of you watched the PBS firearm documentaries, they were all extremely informative.

The state of mental health care in the US and CT is miserable. Once a person reaches 18, the parents can not get a person help unless the mentally ill person asks for it. I know this first hand since my brother has mental health issues and got into trouble with a firearm. I remember when my cousin first called me. I thought for sure my brother or someone else was dead. Luckily in my brother's case, no one was hurt and I hoped the incident would force my brother to get help. Well I was wrong. The prison he was sent to would not diagnose his illness and the State of CT probation office wouldn't get involved either, even though a judge ordered my brother to get mental health care. So after everything that happened, my brother still has not been helped. This has got to change.

Also I have been directly effected by the passage of the 2003 CT assault weapons ban which was pushed through by Mike Lawler and now Senator Blumenthal. I was horrified to learn years later, that the passage of this confusing law had made me a felon even though I have never done anything wrong had always had a job, always paid my taxes and thought I was a good law abiding citizen. I was never notified of the original 2003 ban and subsequently, after 12 years of safely owning the firearm, had to destroy it and turn it into the state police even though I had proof I had legally purchased it before the law was passed. The AK-Type firearm I had to destroy only had a 5 round magazine but was targeted by Mike Lawler even though other firearms of the same type in different calibers are currently still legal to purchase in CT. The features part of the law is ridiculous as non of the banned features in any way makes the firearm more dangerous, they just change the appearance of the firearm.

Also in 2011 I was a victim of a pontential home invastion. The person who tried to break into my house knew someone was home and didn't care. Luckily for me the would be home invader fled when I turned on the outside flood lights. It took the state police over 15 minutes to get to my house after I called them. I may have been killed if the person had broken in instead of fleeing. It is sad that everyone has forgotten the Petit family already. This event really scared me to the point I got my concealed carry permit, and and now can defend myself if it happens again. I am strongly against any law which affects my ability to own a firearm or so called assault weapon, or will not allow me to defend myself in my own home. I pray I will never have to use

the firearm I bought, but I refuse to be defenseless in my own home.

Also I know this is not a popular topic, but there has to be something done about the horrific amount of violence which is currently portrayed in computer games. These games desensitize people to extreme violence and are in no way representative of owning or safely handling and firing an actual firearm. I liken the violence in these game to pornography, and some of the latest games are XXX and have no place being played by youngsters. You should all personally take a look at some of the most violent of these games you will be shocked I guarantee it.

The decisions you have to make on all these issues are not going to be easy, but please try to weigh all the factors before you blindly write new laws. Please do not just react like New York did. There is common ground here, no one wants criminals or mentally ill people to have firearms. This is what you need to focus on, not a quick gun and magazine ban, which ultimately will not help or protect anyone.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Please respond to:

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